

The **Historian**

of Hancock County

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

October 1995

CEMETERY TOUR

Our October event will be the third annual Cemetery Tour, set from 5 p.m. until 8 p.m. on Halloween in Cedar Rest Cemetery on Second Street, Bay St. Louis.

Tour guides will lead the public among the cemetery's tombs and plots where they will meet costumed actors portraying earlier Hancock Countians, who will tell about their lives and accomplishments while they lived. Some of the participants are descendants of the characters they portray.

Admission is by \$1 donation, with children free. Reservations are not necessary.

For more information call 467-4090.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The time is nigh to elect board members to serve from January 1996 through December 1997. Final selections will be made in elections at the November meeting.

Our nominating committee will submit its recommendations but we are asking the general membership also for nominations. If you would like to serve or to recommend someone, please call 467-4090 or nominate from the

(Continued on page 3)



**BOURGEOIS GHOST HOUSE IN WAVELAND
DESTROYED BY HURRICANE CAMILLE**

COAST GHOSTS

With Halloween upon us, stories of goblins and ghosts abound. They may be the same old tired stories, but they thrill nonetheless, sending delicious chills down the spine.

The Mississippi Coast has a bountiful share of ghost stories, some told for many generations. In case you've missed them over the years, we'll give you a quick rehash, or as the academics say, "Here's Spooks 101."

While ghosts are generally elusive creatures, if creatures they be, there's one family that hears their house's ghost and actually caught him in a photo. The ghost of Leon Bourgeois and his sister-guardian Angeline were captured

on film the day after Hurricane Camille in 1969. The home, shown above, was demolished except for the front steps.

The Bourgeois family had built the house in the 19th century, and the last of that family to occupy it were the invalid Leon and his caretaker, Angeline. It had changed hands several times until the family of Carlos J. Lozano Jr. bought it in 1958. Carlos's wife, Lois, said that she occasionally caught a glimpse of Leon, a shadowy figure on the stairs, or heard something like the dragging of feet in carpet slippers in the hall.

The day after Camille when Lozano hired a photographer to record the damage to the house on South Beach in Waveland,

(Ghosts, from page 1)

the developed photo showed Leon and Angeline sitting behind the steps.

"Before Camille, I saw him and heard him all the time," Mrs. Lozano said. "But after the storm, we never saw him again. Some ghost experts say that after the house was destroyed, he no longer had anything to haunt."

Another famous Waveland ghost who disappeared after "his" house was demolished by Camille was the ghoulie who haunted Jean Lafitte's Pirate House. Here's a version of one sighting recorded by Kat Bergeron of the Sun Herald in 1986:

After she had turned off the living room light and started up the staircase, Mrs. James W. Faulkner screamed. Standing at the top of the stairs was a death-like image of a man whose stare was almost hypnotic. When Mrs. Faulkner moved towards him, he vanished into nothingness.

Blood-stained walls, unexplained moans, screams and ghostly apparitions had long been a part of the Pirate House mystique. The 1930s incident was one of many incidents stretching over more than a century at the large, elegant home on Waveland's beachfront road.

The large house reportedly was built in 1802 by a New Orleans businessman who moonlighted as a pirate and financial agent of Jean Lafitte and his Baratania pirates. Some accounts say the house actually belonged to Lafitte. A tunnel ran from the water's edge to the



house's basement, which some believed doubled as a holding place for "black ivory", illegally smuggled slaves.

One of the earliest legends of the site tells of a deep well in the back yard that became the early graves of three men who had been thrown, alive, into its depths. That very afternoon the ghost of one of them who was wearing shirt sleeves returned to walk across the yard - and he has continued to do so.

In the mid 1930s when the Singreens bought the house, a large photograph was snapped of everyone standing on the front gallery steps. When it was developed, an image of a man in shirt sleeves could be seen at the window of an upstairs room.

Later owners, Mr. and Mrs. Bjorn Lister, liked to think of the old house as not haunted, just inhabited by "visitants." Then came murderous Hurricane Camille, a 1969 storm that tore the legendary house apart like match sticks. The Listers collected the thousands of bricks

strewn about the area, including the doors and grillwork they could find, and constructed a much smaller cottage 50 feet to the rear of the original house.

And were the ghosts blown away too? Officially, yes, but there are rumors....

From Pass Christian comes the story of the exotic "Ethereal Harpist." Here's Bergeron's account:

On days when the wind is just right off a certain Pass Christian beach, the haunting melodies of a harp can be heard mingling with Gulf breezes.

In Katherine Windham's book, "Jeffrey Introduces 13 More Southern Ghosts," the tale is spun of a 19th century beauty who paid the highest price for infidelity to her doting husband.

When the wealthy couple fled Uruguay during the 1850s revolution there, they found passage on a boat headed to New Orleans. It was a long, boring trip and Julia - who was much younger than Senor Venesto - easily succumbed to

CIVIL WAR DAYS - HANCOCK COUNTY AND VICINITY
COMPILED AND EDITED BY CLYDE CUCULLU
MEMBER - HANCOCK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Shieldsboro, Miss.

July 12, 1861

To his Excellency J. J. Pettus
Sir:

I am at this place with my Company and have been here since the 28th ult. and have been on duty. I had the honor to report to your Excellency on my arrival here and the causes which prompted me to the course.

We were mustered into service on the 9th instant by Capt. Eager of the "Shieldsboro Rifles." By Muster Roll will be forwarded by Mr. Monet who will go up to Jackson in a few days.

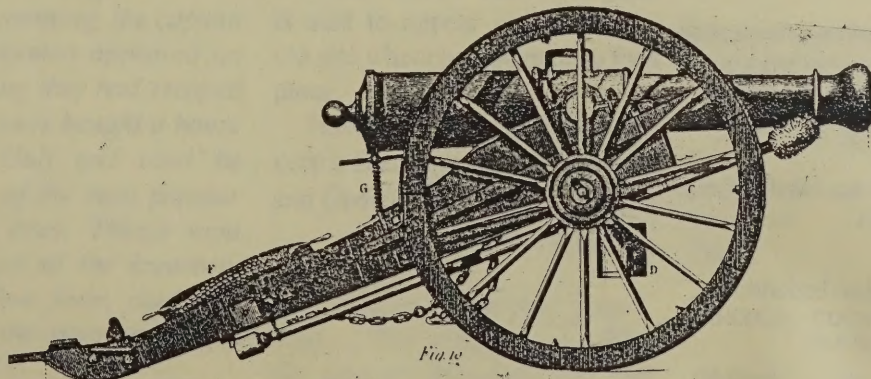
I would beg leave to state that my services are much needed at this place at the present and the force now here (Capt. Eager's and my own Company) are scarcely strong enough for the defence of this part of the Coast as there has already been attempts to commit depredations by the enemy. We, however, have held them at bay.

I shall await your Excellencys further orders.

J. B. DEASON

Captain Gainesville Vols.

Source: MA - Series E v. 52 (Pettus)



the attractions of the boat's Captain Hawes.

Her husband, thinking Julia's moodiness was due to no more parties and her lost harp, bought her another instrument while in port en route. She would sit on the deck for hours entertaining the crew and passengers.

Capt Hawes learned there was another Vinesto treasure he desired: a trunk full of gold coins. In his mind he lusted after both the woman and the money, so it was not surprising that Senor Vinesto "accidentally" fell overboard and disappeared.

Hawes became worried when Julia wanted him to confess his sins to a priest for forgiveness. He was afraid she would talk, so instead of bringing the ship into port at New Orleans, he anchored off Pass Christian.

When residents of the coastal village saw a glare not far from shore, they set out in rowboats to rescue passengers from what they guessed was a burning ship. The vessel exploded before they arrived but the would-be rescuers returned with a tale of hearing hauntingly beautiful sounds of a harp playing old Portuguese love songs.

The next morning, the captain and four crewmen appeared on shore claiming they had escaped the blaze. Hawes bought a house facing the Gulf and soon he became one of the most popular men in the area. Things went well until one of the crewmen, dying of yellow fever, confessed to a doctor the story of murder and intrigue.

When Hawes realized his secret was out, he went to an

old oak tree on the shoreline and began to dig. A local doctor and two of his friends were watching from the brush when they became conscious of the squeak of rusty oarlocks and harp music.

A rowboat approached the shore, manned by four skeletons and a ghostly young woman playing the harp. Captain Hawes looked up in shock, fell forward, and struck his head on the chest he had just uncovered. In his hand he clutched a few gold coins, but the chest was empty.

Bay St. Louis also has had its share of spooks over the years.

Dorothy Brown reports seeing a bevy of ghosts drifting in from the cemetery next door to her Antiques Arcade, formerly the Woodmen of the World Building on Second Street.

And there are conflicting stories of a ghost that appears from time to time in a window of the county courthouse on Main Street.

The story has it that it is the ghost of a young woman whose husband was hanged in the courtyard behind the courthouse for a crime he did not commit. And the window where the ghost is said to appear overlooks that old site where hangings once took place.

Have a Happy Halloween but keep a sharp eye out for Ghosties and Ghoulies.

Edith Back

President continued from page 1 floor. The offices being filled this year are President, 2nd Vice President in charge of Museums (Lobrano House), Corresponding

Secretary, Historian and Publicity. It is important that we have officers this year who have sufficient time to give to the job and who are particularly dedicated. This will be our first year in the new facilities (hopefully) and there is so much that can be accomplished.

Charles Gray, President

PASSAGES

The Society offers condolences to the families mourning the loss of our members who died in recent weeks:

Barbara Jo Fitch

William P. Hilliker

Richard E. Reeves

LOBRANO HOUSE HOURS

MON. 8 to 4 or by
TUE. 8 to 4 appointment
THU. 8 to 4

HISTORIAN

of Hancock County

Publisher: Charles H. Gray
Editor: Edith Back

Published monthly by the
HANCOCK COUNTY HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

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Hancock County Historical Society

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